

our State and local law enforcement, Federal agents, community members, victims' advocates, the faith-based community, and others, but they need our help to make laws to better support their efforts. So I urge all of my colleagues to support the five bills that will be on the floor tonight to help get our criminal justice and victim support systems caught up with a rapidly evolving international crime.

THE INFANT AND TODDLER CARE IMPROVEMENT ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Massachusetts (Ms. CLARK) for 5 minutes.

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, today, as a country, we face many economic challenges: income disparity, stagnant wages, and an alarming rise of children living in poverty. Luckily, all available research points to a solution. High-quality early childhood education and care is as close to a silver bullet as we are going to find. It supports working families, creates economic opportunities for women, and provides a great start for our youngest learners.

But today, hardworking families spend an extraordinary percentage of their income on child care. Even then, they are not always sure it meets the needs of their kids. Mr. Speaker, that is why I am introducing a bill today to help ensure quality care for infants and toddlers. As a mother of three, I understand that parents want nothing more than to make sure their kids are healthy, safe, and thriving.

More than 6 million children under the age of 3 will spend time in child care this week. At this tender age, when brain development is at its peak, when neuropathways are being formed every second by the millions, that is when quality child care matters most.

Today I encourage my colleagues to help these children and their families succeed by supporting the Infant and Toddler Care Improvement Act.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 26 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

Reverend Charlie Martin, Bethel Baptist Church, Vilas, North Carolina, offered the following prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father, today, Lord, we enter Your gates with thanksgiving and enter Your courts with praise. Thank You for Your blessings for America, our home. I call on You, O Lord, to bless our land again.

In the Bible, we read, "If My people which are called by My name shall humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from Heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land."

Father, You know that I trust You and Your holy Word. I call on You this morning to place Your great hand upon this Congress and upon this people.

Please grant Your wisdom in their decisions and leadership on behalf of all Americans. For all of us who love this land and call America home, we call on You together today.

In Jesus' name, amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

WELCOMING REVEREND CHARLIE MARTIN

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, Pastor Charlie Martin has preached the Gospel for 45 years.

Charlie Martin attended Trinity College of Florida and continues to serve as vice president of that institution. After college, he began working with youth at his home church in Arkansas.

In 1971, he was called to pastor First Baptist Church of Indian Rocks in Largo, Florida. The Lord blessed the 37 years he spent there, with the church growing from fewer than 100 to over 6,000 members under his care.

Largo is also where Pastor Martin met Stephanie, his wife of 38 years. Together, they have raised five children—Shannon, Christian, Somer, Samara, and Colt. All five children are grown and happily married, and the Martins delight in their 16 grandchildren.

For the past 7 years, Pastor Martin has led the good people of Bethel Baptist Church in Vilas, North Carolina. We are blessed to have this man of God

living and working in our community in the mountains of North Carolina, and I want to thank him for opening the House with a prayer today.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FLEISCHMANN). The Chair will entertain up to 15 further requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

COMMEMORATING THE 239TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MECKLENBURG DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

(Mr. HUDSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HUDSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 239th anniversary of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence.

This date marks an important moment in our Nation's history, when brave North Carolinians, bound by their common pursuit of freedom, became the first Americans to declare independence from the tyrannical crown of Great Britain. This courageous act of defiance paved the way for our great experiment in democracy.

It is no wonder that, with these type of bold leaders, British commander General Cornwallis was unable to hold his occupation of the city of Charlotte and was, therefore, prompted to write that it was a "hornet's nest of rebellion."

Mr. Speaker, it is also worth noting that, on this very day today, the Charlotte Bobcats—excuse me, the Charlotte Hornets—finally and rightfully get their buzz back.

I am so proud of our heritage and for the leadership that the State of North Carolina continues to provide this great Nation.

Mr. Speaker, on this festive day, I want to congratulate the city of Charlotte and all North Carolinians, and I welcome each and every one of my colleagues to join me in celebrating this important moment in our history.

THE EPIDEMIC OF AUTISM

(Mr. QUIGLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to draw attention to an epidemic in our country. We have seen rates of autism rising rapidly in the past two decades. Today, 1 in 68 children is diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder.

This weekend, I attended the Autism Speaks walk in Chicago. I was inspired by the stories of young men and women and the realization that there are opportunities for all those living with autism.